

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

131111Z May 03

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 COLOMBO 000809

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ECA/PE/V/F/A, ECA/PE/V/G/N-ALICE SHIFFLETT;
SA/PD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OEXC](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [OEXC](#)

SUBJECT: FY-2003 VOLUNTARY VISITOR PROGRAM: SRI LANKAN
NOMINATION

1. COLOMBO REQUESTS A FUNDED VOLVIS PROGRAM FOR MR. IQBAL ATHAS, CONSULTANT EDITOR AND DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT, "THE SUNDAY TIMES" (INDEPENDENT ENGLISH WEEKENDER, NATIONAL CIRCULATION). ATHAS IS VISITING WASHINGTON TO ATTEND THE INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS AND EDITORS ANNUAL CONFERENCE. AS A TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY POST WISHES TO OFFER MR. ATHAS A 10-DAY VOLUNTARY VISITOR PROGRAM ON U.S. GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES, ESPECIALLY IN DEFENSE, NATIONAL SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND ANTI-TERRORISM, STARTING JUNE 9. PLEASE ADVISE IF THIS PROJECT CAN BE ACCEPTED FOR PROGRAMMING.

2. THE NOMINEES' BIO DATA, JUSTIFICATION AND PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS IN EVDB FORMAT FOLLOWS:

START FIXED-FORMAT TEXT (PLEASE DO NOT EDIT):
: The following data is in a fixed format which enables
: automated processing in Washington and should not be
: edited except by means of the Post-EVDB software.
EXPORT-SOURCE: POST-EVDB
VERSION: 3.0.5
POST-EMAIL: rscmb@pd.state.gov
TRANSMITTING-POST: PAS Colombo
TRANSMITTING-POST-ID: 2929
EXPORT-TYPE: BIO DATA
START NOMINATION:
ECA-OFFICE: E/VGN
PROG-AGENCY-NAME:
POST-PROJ-ID: 81
ECA-PROJ-NO:
PROJ-NAME: Voluntary Visitor - ATHAS, Alavy Iqbal
START MEMO PROJ-DESC:

END MEMO PROJ-DESC:
PROJ-TYPE: Individual
PROG-TYPE: IV Grant Visitor
FY: 2003

DEPART-POST: 06/02/2003

SESSION-DATE:

RETURN-POST: 06/29/2003

NO-OF-PART: 1

RANK-ORDER: 0

START MEMO POST-OBJ:

This nomination is in support of MPP goal on "Democracy". As a leading journalist Mr. Athas should be provided with wide exposure to U.S. government policies, especially in foreign policy, defense and national security, and anti-terrorism.

END MEMO POST-OBJ:

START MEMO POST-RCMD:

As stated in the justification, Mr. Athas should be provided with wide exposure to U.S. government and its policies, especially in defense, national security, foreign policy, and anti-terrorism. His program could include the following: Meet with officials of the Congressional Foreign Relations Committee to get comprehensive overview of U.S. foreign policy; provide an overview of U.S. political process, the U.S. federal system; briefings on U.S. government's goal of democracy building and human rights promotion; an overview of U.S. national security policy and vital security interests; and briefings on U.S. initiatives to combat international terrorism and responses to threats of terrorism. He should also meet with representatives of the National Security Council, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism. He should visit a state capitol to see how the federal system works at the state level.

END MEMO POST-RCMD:

ECA-OFFICE-ID: 1039

PROG-AGENCY-ID:

PROJ-TYPE-ID: IND

PROG-TYPE-ID: 29

NOMINATING-POST-ID: 2929

FUNDING-CNTRY-ID:

STATUS: N

ORIGINATOR: P

SUBJ-DISC: Conflict Resolution

START BIO:
PREFIX: Mr.
F-NAME: Alavy
M-NAME: Iqbal
L-NAME: ATHAS
SUFFIX:
POSITION-CODE: 0
PRINCIPAL?: Yes
M-ADDR1: "Jasmin Court"
M-ADDR2: 60/1 Wijerama Lane
M-ADDR3: Udahamulla
M-CITY: Nugegoda
M-STATE:
M-CNTRY: Sri Lanka
M-ZONE:
M-ZIP:
M-PHONE: (94-1) 803-923
M-FAX: (94-1) 801-196
M-EMAIL: athas@sltnet.lk
M-CNTRY-ID: CE
M-ADDRTYPE: H
GENDER: M
DOB: 09/01/1944
MAR-STAT: M
BIRTH-CITY: Colombo
BIRTH-CNTRY: Sri Lanka
CITIZ-CNTRY: Sri Lanka
RES-CNTRY: Sri Lanka
START MEMO POSITION:
Consultant Editor - Defence Correspondent, The Sunday
Times, 1995- to date
END MEMO POSITION:
START MEMO OTHER-POSITIONS:
Colombo correspondent for CNN, Jane's Defence Weekly
and The Sunday Times, London
END MEMO OTHER-POSITIONS:
START MEMO PREV-POSITIONS:
1994 - Associate Editor, Sunday Leader
1965-90 - served the now defunct Independent Newspapers
Ltd., in various positions and ended up as the Deputy
Editor of Sun and Weekend
Served for 14 years as Colombo correspondent of London
based Worldwide Television News (WTN), until it was
purchased by Associated Press (APTN)

END MEMO PREV-POSITIONS:
START MEMO US-TRAVEL:
1988 - To participate in a Multi-Regional Project on
"The 1988 Election Campaign"
END MEMO US-TRAVEL:
START MEMO OTHER-TRAVEL:
He has travelled extensively on business and vacation.
His travel includes:
U.K. France, Cuba, China, Hong Kong, Maldives, India,
Korea, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Nepal, Malaysia,
Indonesia and Italy
END MEMO OTHER-TRAVEL:
START MEMO EDUCATION:
Commonwealth Press Union, U.K., May-August 1978 -
Fellowship
Oxford University, U.K., June 1978 - Course on
Commonwealth and International Affairs
Thomson Foundation Editorial Study Center, U.K.,
Workshop
END MEMO EDUCATION:
START MEMO MEMBERSHIPS:
Member, International Consortium of Investigative
Journalists (ICIJ)
END MEMO MEMBERSHIPS:
START MEMO PUBLICATIONS:

END MEMO PUBLICATIONS:
START MEMO SPEC-CONSID:

END MEMO SPEC-CONSID:
FIRST-LANG: Tamil
ENGL-READ: 4
ENGL-SPEAK: 4
ENGL-COMP: 4
START OTHER-LANGS:
OTHER-LANG: Sinhala
OTHER-LANG-ID: SI
READ: 4
SPEAK: 4
COMP: 4
END OTHER-LANGS:
START MEMO NOM-POST-OBJ:
This nomination is in support of MPP goal on
"Democracy". As a leading journalist Mr. Athas should
be provided with wide exposure to U.S. government
policies, especially in foreign policy, defense and
national security, and anti-terrorism.
END MEMO NOM-POST-OBJ:
START MEMO NOM-POST-RCMD:
As stated in the justification, Mr. Athas should be
provided with a wide exposure to U.S. government and

its policies, especially in defense, national security, foreign policy and anti-terrorism. His program could include the following: Meet with officials of the Congressional Foreign Relations Committee to get comprehensive overview of U.S. foreign policy; provide an overview of U.S. political process, the U.S. federal system; briefings on U.S. government's goal of democracy building and human rights promotion; an overview of U.S. national security policy and vital security interests; and briefings on U.S. initiatives to combat international terrorism and responses to threats of terrorism. He should also meet with representatives of the National Security Council, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Coordinator for Counter Terrorism. He should visit a state capitol to see how the federal system works at the state level.

END MEMO NOM-POST-RCMD:

START MEMO VIS-OBJ:

To have a thorough understanding of U.S. federal system, foreign policy formulation, defense policy and security concerns.

END MEMO VIS-OBJ:

START MEMO VIS-REC:

In addition to what have been incorporated in Post recommendations, Post suggests Mr. Athas meet with Robin Raphel of the National Defense University to discuss a book project he has undertaken.

END MEMO VIS-REC:

NOMINATING-OFFICER: Bruce A. Lohof

START MEMO NOMINATING-JUSTIFICATION:

Mr. Athas is a very senior journalist in the Sri Lankan print media who has specialized as a defence correspondent. He regularly contributes to the widely read defence column in "The Sunday Times" newspaper. In addition to being the defence correspondent, he is also the Consultant Editor of this paper. During the prolonged ethnic strife in Sri Lanka he received threats from certain elements in the Armed Services who did not take too kind to the revelations in his column.

Recognizing his contributions in the field of journalism New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) awarded him the prestigious Press Freedom Award in 1994. The Editors' Guild of Sri Lanka awarded him the 'Journalist of the Year 1998', and the 'Columnist of the Year 2001'. He is the only Sri Lankan journalist invited as a member in the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

Mr. Athas is visiting the U.S. to attend the Investigative Reporters and Editors Annual Conference to be held in Washington from June 5-8 at the National Press Club. As a target of opportunity, post proposes a 10-day funded Volvis program for this highly respected Sri Lankan journalist on governmental affairs and security issues. Post believes that this proposed Volvis program would provide him with a wide exposure to U.S. government and its policies especially in defense, national security, foreign policy, and anti-terrorism. This will result in multiplier effect as he will use the newly acquired knowledge in his widely read column. If this proposal is accepted, Mr. Athas will be available for programming in Washington from June 9.

END MEMO NOMINATING-JUSTIFICATION:

NOM-OFF: Public Affairs Section

SPEAKER?: No

NOTIFY-EMB: Yes

MEDIA?: No

HOME-STAY: No

HOME-HOSP?: Yes

E-I-TYPE:

NOMINEE-ID: 116

PERSON-ID: 119

BIRTH-CNTRY-ID: CE

CITIZ-CNTRY-ID: CE

RES-CNTRY-ID: CE

FIRST-LANG-ID: TC

E-I-TYPE-ID:

NOM-POST-ID: 2929

NOM-FUNDING-CNTRY-ID:

NOM-STATUS: N

DS2019-ACTION: 1

DS2019-SUBJECT:

SPONS-FUNDS: 0

SPONS-AGENCY1:

USGOVT-AGENCY1:

US-AGENCY-AMT1: 0

USGOVT-AGENCY2:

US-AGENCY-AMT2: 0

INTL-ORG1:

INTL-ORG-AMOUNT1: 0

INTL-ORG2:
INTL-ORG-AMOUNT2: 0
VIS-GOVT-AMT: 0
COMMISSION: 0
OTHER-AMOUNT: 0
VIS-AMOUNT: 0
VIS-CAT: 5
END BIO:
END NOMINATION:
END FIXED-FORMAT TEXT:

13. PLEASE ADVISE ACCEPTANCE OF THIS NOMINATION.
WILLS